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THE SKETCH,
JULY 24, 1946

The Sketch

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DUNLOP TYRES

The Sketch

No. 2657—Vol. CCV.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 1946

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ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.

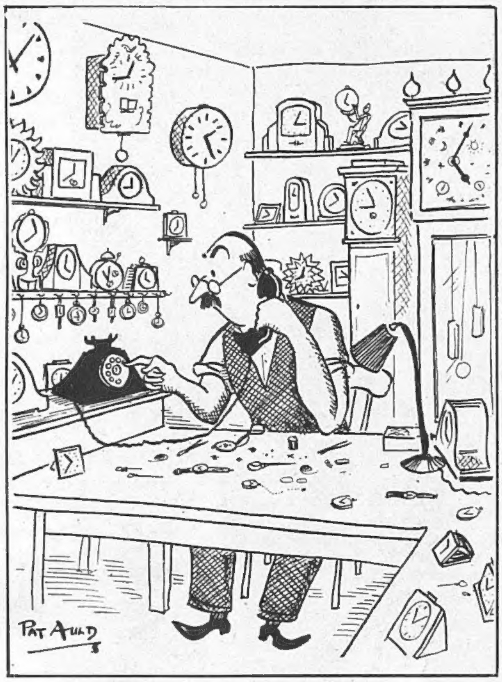
THE DAUGHTERS OF "COMMANDO No. 1."

The two daughters of Lord and Lady Louis Mountbatten, PATRICIA *aged twenty-two, lately demobilised from the W.R.N.S., and* PAMELA *aged seventeen, accompanied their father and mother to the Mansion House recently, when Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander S.E.A.C., received the Freedom of the City and a token of the coveted Sword of Honour, which itself is still in the hands of the craftsman.*

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

Serious Business. • You have heard, if you are the well-informed person I take you to be, where the Battle of Waterloo was won; but do you know where Alamein and the Battle of Britain and the Battle of the Bulge were won? A glance at the papers will tell you. Not exclusively at Eton, but at Lord's, Wimbledon, St. Andrews, Henley—not to mention Broadha'penny Down and hundreds of village greens. The moment war is over, England has some serious business to be getting on with. Internationally, the results of her sporting contests are not, perhaps, flattering to her pride, but she certainly cannot be accused of not trying. Anyhow, even in an international sense I find the news from the playing-fields more refreshing than the news from the diplomatic battle-fields. If the statesmen would only agree to settle their differences by sporting encounters, how much better the international atmosphere would be! I suggest a tug-of-peace; our side could supply a useful amount of weight.



"T . . . I . . . M . . . ."

DRAWN BY PAT AULD.

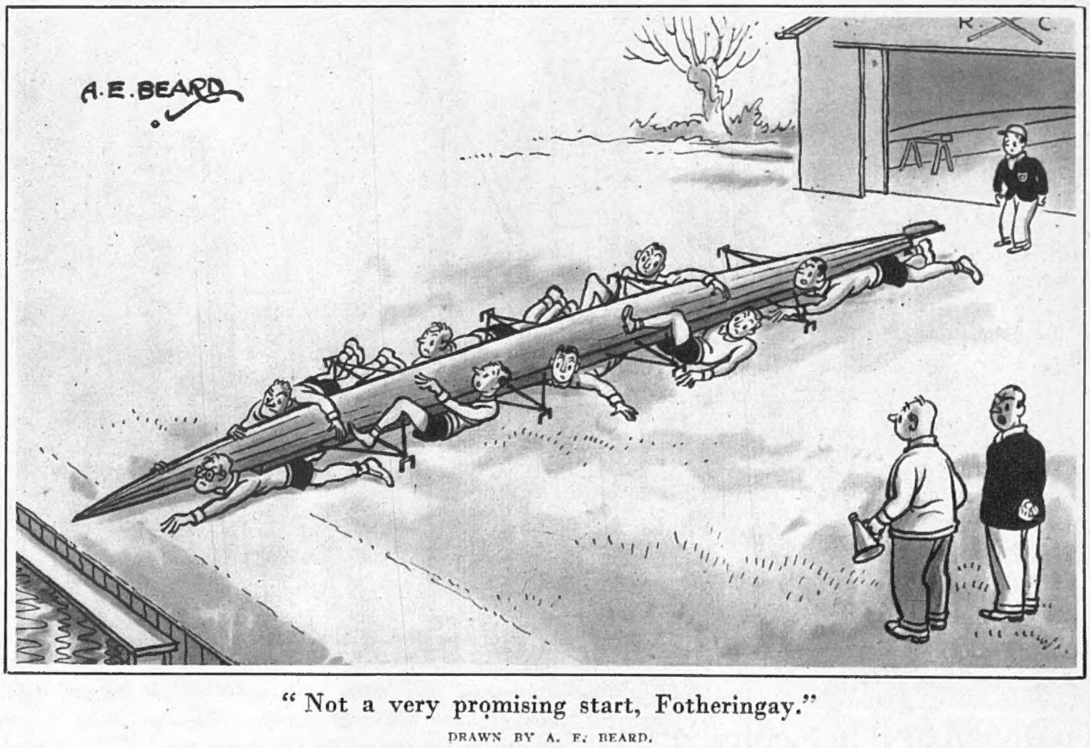
No Ball! It is curious that we should have any energy left, being, notoriously, as "exhausted" after every war as we are "decadent" before it. The most unexpected persons seem able to put forth a creditable effort when necessary. The other day a man who won a Marathon walking race of a mere 129 miles was described by his friends and admirers as a "physical wreck." I dare say there were a few physical wrecks of that kind among the Few who saved the Many. Indeed, it is remarkable how much has been done in the world, in every sphere by physical wrecks. And yet, amid all this outburst of energy, a note of sadness creeps in. At Long Buckley, Northants, a village match nearly had to be abandoned because no cricket-ball could be obtained! There is, indeed, no limit to the cruel and subtle devastation of war. Just fancy if Snead had been unable to win because he couldn't get a ball! That, anyhow, was one of the reasons why some of us did not compete in the Open Championship this year.

Poor Old Us! It is extraordinary that we can so light-heartedly don our white flannels when we ought really, if we had any conscience, to be arraying ourselves in white sheets. It would be paltering with the truth to pretend that we are as much beloved in all parts of the world as we deserve to be beloved. Thousands march both in New York and in Trafalgar Square to protest against our Nazi iniquities. There are those in India and Malaya, and even in Moscow, who not only dissemble their love, but show a disposition to kick us downstairs. Congressmen—aye, and Congresswomen—do not conceal their low opinion of us, asking what we have ever done for the world in general or the United States in particular, except to thwart, cheat and oppress. When, on top of everything else, I see a headline "Eire Blames Britain," I ask myself whether there is anybody in the world who does not blame us for something, or, more probably, for everything. It seems to me that there are only two alternatives—either we are too good for this world, or we are not fit to live. Think it over and take your choice!

"It's nothing at all, really. . . . I just wanted to feel what it was like to pay for something at pre-war price!"

DRAWN BY STARKE.

Not a Happy One? It must be admitted that we cannot claim virtue in all respects. I do not remember any period when there was such an epidemic of murder most foul. Unless I am mistaken, there was nothing quite as bad after the previous war; and I am not sure that war has anything to do with it, though that is the popular theory. At this moment of writing, Scotland Yard has certainly five, and possibly



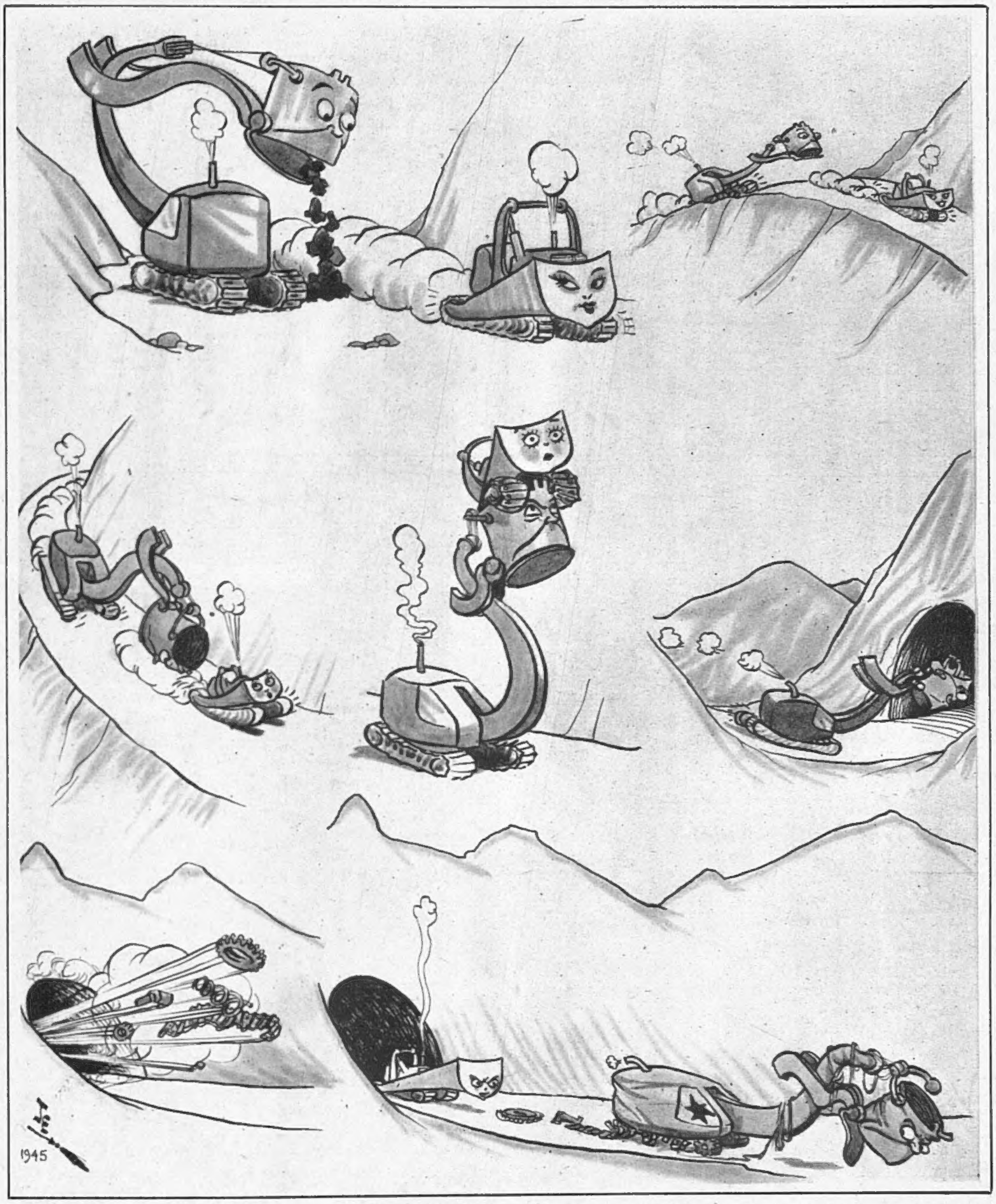
"Not a very promising start, Fotheringay."

DRAWN BY A. E. BEARD.

more, unsolved murders, most of them of a peculiarly horrible nature, on its hands. A policeman's lot is certainly not a happy one during this particular phase (which will pass); and yet it has its compensations. Finding a few tea-chests, by the roadside, full of antiques worth £40,000 is the sort of thing which does bring a little brightness into a policeman's life, even if his pleasure is purely altruistic. It is right that it should happen to policemen, for it certainly does not seem to happen to the rest of us.

Keep Death Off the Altar!

I fear also that we cannot take much unction to ourselves about the present condition of unholy matrimony. In 1939 it was estimated that one marriage in every twenty came to grief. To-day it is stated on good authority that one in every five goes straight on the rocks, after a very brief voyage—neither party, it seems, having the smallest idea of navigation. A Secretary of the Marriage Guidance Council, using another metaphor, declares that "the Divorce Court is the mortuary for dead marriages. What is wanted is hospitals for sick ones." It may be so, but it is difficult to see how hospitals are going to effect cures when so many of the patients are dead before they are brought in. Marriage does not lend itself easily to artificial respiration. However, as I have no other remedy to suggest (except a change not merely of one heart but of two hearts), I dare say artificial respiration, or blood transfusion, is better than nothing, and I certainly would not discourage those who are trying to administer it.



APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR.

DRAWN BY J. E. BROOME.

The Home Efficient.

I wonder how many of these homes are, like the crockery, broken in the kitchen and the scullery? If that is the main source of trouble, then everything is going to be all right, because we are all going to be *educated* into a better frame of mind. "Domestic workers" are going to colleges to be taught how to make a cup or tea and boil a potato—and that will certainly be a great advance in our civilisation. The term "domestic workers" must be taken to include not only Ladies Who Come in to Help, but wives and (I am perturbed to see) even husbands. And so Miss Wilkinson is going to provide Homecraft Instruction Courses for husbands and wives, with expert training in (to name only a few subjects) cookery, household budgeting, sanitation, ventilation, water supply, repairs and decorations, clothing, linen, furnishings, needlework, maternity, child welfare and health education. Admirable! If prefabricated homes, why not prefabricated marriages? All that is needed now is a Central Selection Bureau to bring the couples together, and if we cannot fill the land with happy homes, then there really seems to be no hope for human nature.

The Wicked Beetle.

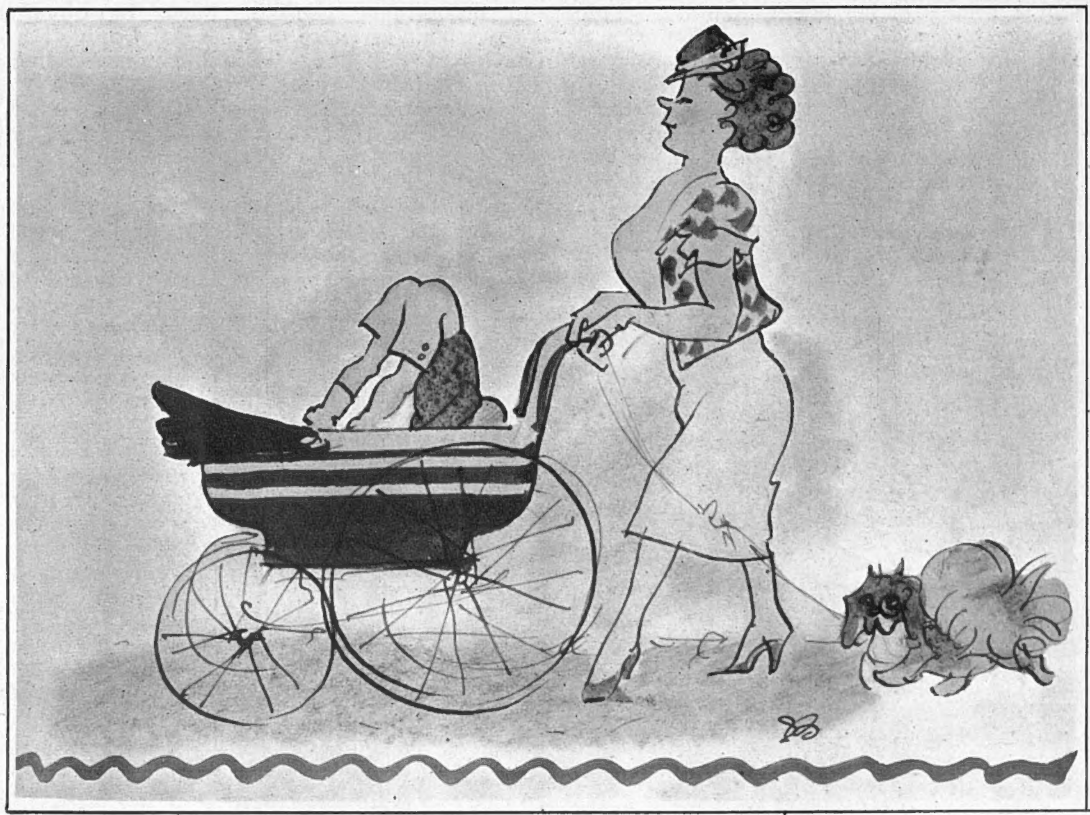
Perhaps, on the whole, it is more cheerful to consider the insect creation, which has been very much in the news recently. A single Colorado beetle, for example, has caused widespread alarm and despondency; and I am greatly impressed by the amount of energy and attention which the lower forms of life have been demanding from us. Thus in Kent men have been waging a war of flame, with every kind of armament short of tanks, on caterpillars, while in Sardinia U.N.R.R.A. planes have been dive-bombing locusts. In Hertfordshire three "click beetles"—the stock from which the execrated wire-worm is descended—have become the focal point of all the resources of science. These singularly honoured beetles are fitted with radium, in little aluminium tubes under their wings, and their progress underground is detected by electrical and radio-active means which I do not profess to understand, and for reasons which are not entirely clear to me—but, anyhow, it is all extremely ingenious and I hope the cause of science and humanity will be greatly advanced, whatever the results to beetles.

The Lower Orders.

We still await news of the 5,000 quadrupeds and insects which were selected for the honour of testing nuclear fission at Bikini. The only report I have seen so far is that a gaggle of goats were "alive and happy, munching hay" after the atom had done its worst to them. Well, I could have told the scientists that; it would be a very mighty atom indeed which would make an impression on any right-minded goat. What of the 4,000 white rats, 200 pigs and mixed bag of creepies, crawlies, bugs and microbes, in variety such as Noah never dreamed of? It has certainly been a lively

[*Continued overleaf.*

The one-hundred-and-forty-sixth of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.



"There 's one born every minute."

DRAWN BY BLAMPIED.

and a trying time for the Lower Orders, and it is good to see, by way of contrast, that some species have received special favour and protection. The white kangaroos at the Zoo are second to none but the panda in popularity, and need only a couple of white elephants as companions to crown the glory of Regent's Park. Other and less remarkable kangaroos have been flown (no doubt in several hops) to Moscow; but, on the other hand, New Zealand firmly refuses to export the kiwi. Very proper too; there are very few dodos left in the world, and they deserve a little peace and home comfort.

Voice Production. With all this "progress" gathering momentum every moment—it is now aiming, I see, at a cruising speed of 670 m.p.h.—it is interesting, if not restful, to look back and calculate the pace. It seems incredible that the talkies (now preparing to celebrate the event) have been with us only for twenty years. No "epoch-making discovery," except the radio, within my recollection rushed upon us so swiftly as this. At one moment talkies were discussed as an interesting possibility, though pooh-poohed, as usual, by many wiseacres as a freakish experiment with no future in it; and the next moment they were everywhere, obviously come to stay, and taken for granted as if they had always been part of our lives. It makes me feel very old to think that in those first flickering movies I ever saw, the appropriate noises were made "off." For the most part they were plausibly done, but the synchronisation was not always perfect, and it added hugely to the general entertainment when the revolver-shot rang out some appreciable seconds after the victim had fallen dead on the carpet.

Tin Lizzie. By comparison with the "photoplay," the automobile is a hoary veteran; it is celebrating its jubilee this month with a cavalcade of 450 motor-cars in all stages of evolution. The unfeeling laughter which the early models will excite will be nothing to the merriment which greeted them when they first appeared. This was another crank invention which obviously had no future; any fool could see that these Puffing Billies—"sparrow-starvers" was perhaps the rudest among many opprobrious names applied to them—would never be able to climb a hill or splutter along for ten miles without breaking down. You 'd have to come back to the good old horse in the long run—and not so very long either! Meanwhile, the public could at least be protected against homicidal lunatics by that highly diverting advance-guard with the red flag. Alas! the trouble about impossible inventions is that they nearly always prove possible. There is much to be said for the reintroduction of the red flag spearhead. Mechanically, it might seem a little reactionary, but politically it would surely be a mark of progress?

Wonderful World.

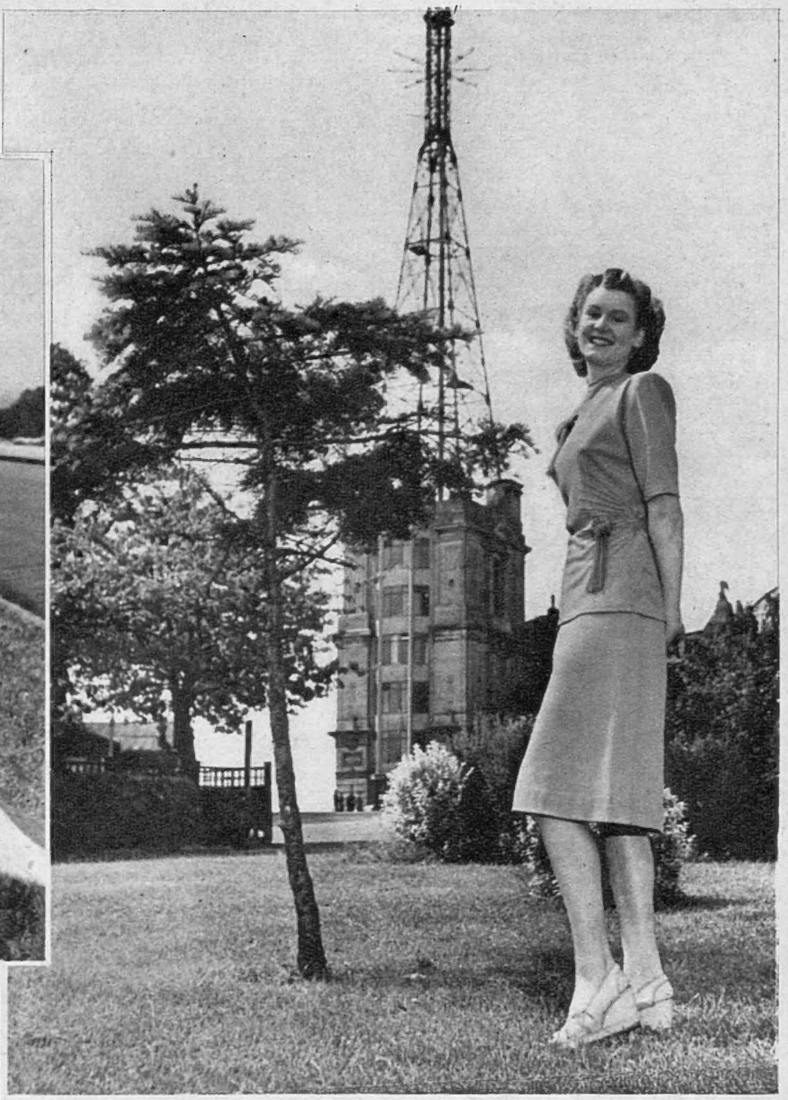
"Mad Marshall" Jacobs, of Coshocton, Ohio, world champion flagpole sitter, has been married at the top of a flagpole 176 ft. high. Love's young dream up the pole or down to earth? An awkward choice!—The British Southern Counties Archery Champion, who will compete in Sweden for the world championship this year, shoots a total arrow-distance of seven miles every year and can split a willow wand or perforate an iron frying-pan at 30 yards range. A general return to this Agincourt spirit might do much for the peace of the world.—298 officials of the Ministry of Food are concerned with rat-catching; 169 of them do the clerical work. The rats are said to find it more deadly than anything else they have to put up with.

As a substitute for their annual banquet the ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS *held a reception at their H.Q. in Portland Place. Many of our foremost architects attended; there was music; exhibitions of town planning, of books, prints and drawings from the library, and buffet refreshments. Mr. L. H. Keay, City Architect and Director of Housing for Liverpool, was elected President.*

CARICATURES BY FRED MAY.

GO ON SAVING PAPER: IT IS STILL ESSENTIAL.

GILLIAN WEBB FOR TELEVISION.



Television's new announcer actress GILLIAN WEBB *took over the coveted job last week from Jasmine Bligh, who resigned. Miss Webb is twenty, tall and slim; fair-haired, brown-eyed; has all the self-possession and poise which is required from television announcers who have to face all sorts of unexpected emergencies and talk their way out of them. While a student at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art she won the Mabel Temperley prize for " grace and charm of speech and movement." She spent the war years touring with ENSA in the Middle East, Iran and Egypt.*

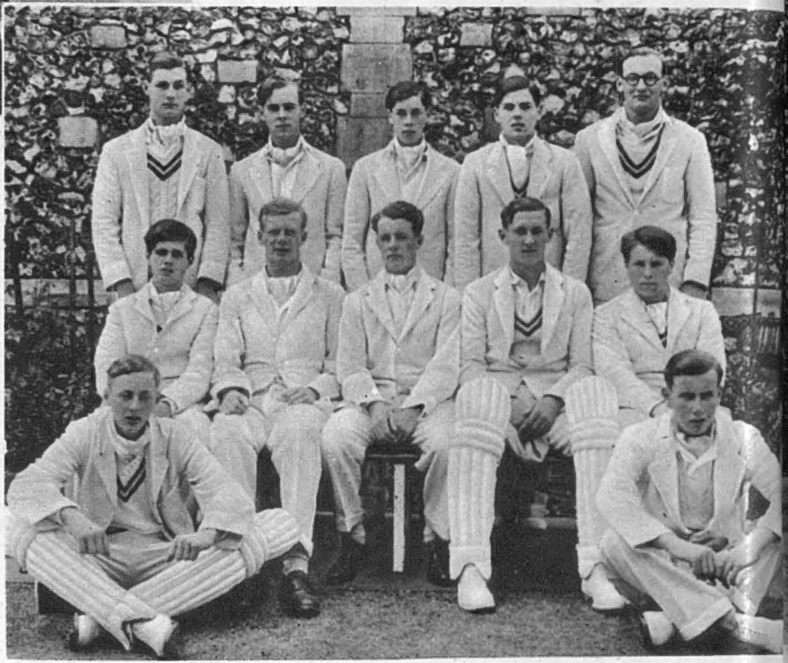
LADY BRUNTISFIELD *was accompanied by her youngest* son *the* HON. ROBIN WARRENDER *and* MISS MARY BULTEEL

LORD *and* LADY SCARBROUGH *went to see the match with the* LADIES MARY, ELIZABETH *and* ANNE LUMLEY.

BRILLIANT printed crêpe-de-Chines, vivid ostrich-feathered, flowered and veiled head-dresses were paraded on the green last week when after a seven-years' lapse the Eton *v.* Harrow cricket match came into its own again at Lord's. There

[*Continued opposite.*

Right: MR. GEOFFREY ROYLE *and* MISS ROYLE *brought a basket.*



The Eton XI., l. to r., back row: C. S. WOODALL; J. A. WORSLEY; J. D. LAKE *(twelfth man); the* HON. P. LINDSAY; F. P. E. GARDNER. *Front row:* R. A. WELLESLEY; R. G. T. SPEER; C. R. D. RUDD *(captain);* W. N. COLES. *On ground:* T. HARE; C. W. R. BYASS.

T J. P.

MR. ANTHONY EDEN *was escorted to the match by his son Nicholas.*

MISS AUDREY WALLIS *talked to her brother* PETER WALLIS, *the captain of Harrow.*

ETON *v.* HARROW AT LORD'S AGAIN

MRS. B. LODER *came with* SIMON *and* GILLIAN.

SIR PELHAM WARNER *arrived with his son and his grandson.*

he Harrow XI., l. to r., back row : P. E. REYNARD ; G. C. HOYER-MILLAR ; D. C. PRIOR ; R. DAY ; R. K. F. C. TREHEARNE-THOMAS. *Front row :* A. S. DAY ; J. C. THORNE ; WALLIS *(captain)* ; P. B. BLACKWELL ; R. LA T. COLTHURST. *On ground :* T. J. M. SKINNER.

Continued.] were a few grey toppers, though Eton toppers and Harrow boaters were missing. But the affair was *chic* and enthusiastic and the weather was perfect. Harrow had a hard fight against Eton; the game finished in a draw, although Eton claimed the extra half-hour in an attempt to force home their advantage.

Left : LADY MAY ABEL-SMITH *was there.*

The HON. P. LINDSAY *(Eton) with* LADY MARY *and* MR. MANNINGHAM-BULLER.

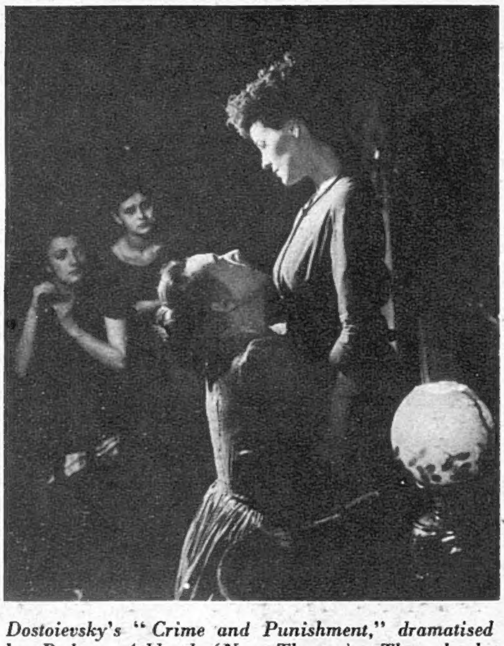
LADY BRECKNOCK *came with her son* LORD BRECKNOCK *and* MISS GIROUARD.

E TEAMS BROUGHT THEIR FAMILIES.

STAGE CAMEOS.

By JOHN RUSSELL.

GLYNDEBOURNE has reopened with Mr. Benjamin Britten's "Rape of Lucretia"; and it should be said at once that this opera, which plays on a stage hitherto reserved for Mozart and Verdi, succeeds by the highest standards in saying something which has never been said in opera before. Its physical resources are tiny; they are those, in fact, of Purcell's "Dido and Æneas," or of Monteverdi's "Orfeo." Its story, glimpsed in Ovid and Livy, tells of how Tarquinius, Prince of Rome, was led by vanity and drunken impulse to rape the chaste wife of a brother officer. From this incident of Roman life in wartime, Mr. Britten and his librettist, Mr. Ronald Duncan, might have devised a pathetic and conventionally salacious anecdote; in its place they have given us a powerful and compassionate work of art. All tragedy depends, not so much upon the opposition of good and evil, as upon the abuse or degradation of what is good in the service of what is evil. In this case the splendid animal grandeur of Tarquinius and his potential nobility are as important as the unchallenged beauty of character from which Lucretia cannot bear to think herself parted. It was foreseeable that Mr. Britten would render with unsurpassable art the peace of the Roman hearth and the lullaby of the pure in heart; but no less magnificent were the scenes in which Tarquinius' unquenchable vigour was slowly aroused to its highest point; and in the second act, when the tragedy had to be resolved, and physical excitements gave place to moral reflection, Mr. Britten managed this difficult transition with true mastery, until the whole world seemed to be revolving around one small phrase of three notes. Mr. John Piper's stage picture contained many unforgettable moments—the night-scene in the Roman camp, where the whole stage glowed and smouldered with reds, touching off the danger-signals of desire; the golden yellow arcades of Lucretia's home, with their presiding statues; the first blaze of Italian sunshine on the morning after the crime; and the great niches from which the male and female chorus delivered their narratives. Mr. Crozier's production had a gravity and economy well suited to the music; and in the second act, where there must have been temptations to easy pathos, the action retained the dignity of a Flaxman relief. This is music in which there are relatively few notes, and every note counts; M. Ansermet drew from his small orchestra a continuous beauty of sound. Not all the singers could command this quality; but Miss Joan Cross sang as well as any woman has ever sung at Glyndebourne, and Mr. Peter Pears, as so often before, lavished all his gifts of phrasing and timbre upon the music which he, of all singers, knows best how to interpret. The whole production has been designed as a portable one, and will later be seen in London, in several provincial cities, and in Copenhagen, Paris and The Hague.



Dostoievsky's "Crime and Punishment," dramatised by Rodney Ackland (New Theatre). Through the drunken improvidence of her father, Sonia (AUDREY FILDES) *is driven on to the streets to feed, house and clothe her stepmother, Katerina* (EDITH EVANS), *and her two stepsisters. Katerina: "It isn't a sin you've committed. I'm the sinner. . . . I'm to blame."*

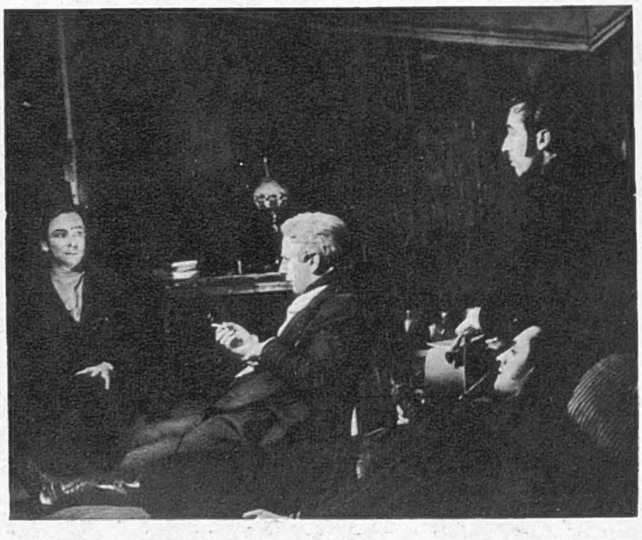
In any other week the twentieth birthday of the Ballet Rambert would deserve to be commemorated at the top of this page. Mme. Rambert has been nobly unpossessive about her best protégés, and it is easily forgotten that, for example, Mr. Frederick Ashton and Mr. Antony Tudor learnt much of their art with her. Such favourite ballets as "Façade" and "Jardin des Lilas," originated on her stage; and a good many of those who now fill Covent Garden every night must have formed their taste on odd Sunday evenings at the tiny Mercury Theatre. The birthday season at Sadler's Wells exemplifies those qualities which, though essential to ballet, are often lost when unfailing popular success has blunted all power of self-criticism. These ballets are unfailingly witty, without vulgar pretension, and Mme. Rambert knows how to train a company in which everyone, though disciplined, is recognisably an individual. There is, moreover, one ballet, "Lady Into Fox," in which Miss Sally Gilmour's performance can stand in any company.

These are great days for balletomanes; the curtain had hardly gone up on "Les Sylphides" at Covent Garden, before it was clear that the New York Ballet Theatre could show us how to perform this simplest and most difficult of ballets. After the attendant groups had folded and unfolded like the petals of a camellia, Mr. Eglevsky showed himself one of the finest of all *danseurs nobles*; later, with Miss Nora Kaye, he attacked a *pas de deux* from Act III. of "Lac des Cygnes" with a concentrated vigour which secured, for both these artists, a long ovation. This company brings us many works of its own, in which full use is made of the acrobatic powers implicit in the classical tradition. Mr. Antony Tudor's "Pillar of Fire" is the first ballet, I believe, to make use of music by Schönberg; its lengthy psychological backwinding contrasts sharply with other works in which this brilliant and youthful company impresses above all by its astonishing gaiety and high spirits. Occasional surrenders to the obvious can be forgotten in gratitude for such pleasures as the revival of "Petrouchka" and the sight of such agreeable young ballerinas as Miss Alicia Alonso.

Carnival of another kind may be enjoyed at the Arts Theatre, where Mr. Shaw's ninetieth birthday is celebrated by performances of "Don Juan In Hell." Mr. Alec Clunes and his colleagues take an evident pleasure in mastering this formidable wedge of argument; on a hot evening it is no perfunctory form of tribute to debate for nearly two hours on end without fluffing a line. And if the audience was held with hardly a cough or a sneeze, the credit is due as much to the actors as to the author. Some of Mr. Shaw's enthusiasms strike us now as archaic; but over and over again his Voltairean thrusts come up as fresh as ever—often, indeed, with some new relevance; and when the hundred minutes have ticked by, there seems hardly a subject in the world that has not been picked up, turned inside out and discarded.

"Summer At Nohant," at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, is a play about George Sand and her family. It is prettily dressed and decorated, and as Solange Sand Miss René Ray gives a lively and forcible impression of the torments endured by the daughter of a genius. She is, however, the only member of the cast who suggests herself to us as an exceptional kind of person; the others, for all their devoted labours, are tied down by conventional stage-talk. The first appearance of Chopin, at the end of the second act, was one of those classical moments of bathos which are among the unacknowledged rewards of the professional theatre-goer.

L. to r.: Raskolnikoff (JOHN GIELGUD), *young intellectual who, from the noblest motives, murders a moneylender; Sonia; Luzhin* (CAMPBELL COTTS) *engaged to Raskolnikoff's sister, Dounia* (CITA CRICHTON; *right*), *and Pulcheria Raskolnikoff* (SYBILLA BINDER), *his mother.*



Raskolnikoff fences with Petrovich (PETER USTINOV), *the insidiously affable Chief of Police, who constantly turns up in his room to grill him, accompanied by his assistant, Zamietoff* (PETER JONES), *an official inimical to the young student.*

PLAYS YOU MUST SEE: "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" (Globe). "THE FIRST GENTLEMAN" (Savoy). "UNDER THE COUNTER" (Phœnix). "SWEETEST AND LOWEST" (Ambassadors). "BIG BEN" (Adelphi).

PLAYS WELL WORTH SEEING: "HIGH TIME" (Palladium). "LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN" (Haymarket). "PERCHANCE TO DREAM" (Hippodrome). "THE NIGHT AND THE MUSIC" (Coliseum). "LADY FROM EDINBURGH" (Playhouse). "THE SHOP AT SLY CORNER" (St. Martin's). "IS YOUR HONEYMOON REALLY NECESSARY?" (Duke of York's). "FOLLOW THE GIRLS" (His Majesty's). "WORM'S EYE VIEW" (Whitehall). "THE GUINEA-PIG" (Criterion). "SONG OF NORWAY" (Palace). "FIFTY-FIFTY" (Strand). "BETTER LATE" (Garrick). "HERE COME THE BOYS" (Saville). "NO ROOM AT THE INN" (Winter Garden). "FRIEDA" (Westminster). "GANG SHOW" (Stoll). "THE KINGMAKER" alternating with "MARRIAGE À LA MODE" (St. James's). "THE WINSLOW BOY" (Lyric). "RED ROSES FOR ME" (Wyndham's). "GRAND NATIONAL NIGHT" (Apollo). "CRIME AND PUNISHMENT" (New).

While every endeavour is made to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

THE Marx Brothers, of whose glorious and unique nonsense the screen has been deprived for five years, are back again in "A NIGHT IN CASABLANCA" (London Pavilion). This is good news. I wish I could couple it with the still better news that their night in Casablanca is as satisfactory as their splendid Night at the Opera, or their historic Day at the Races. There are moments of magnificent fun in the new film, but alas! there are not enough of them. A slight but perceptible change has come over the Marx comedy. The Brothers appear to be passing out of their *surrealist* mood into a style of more conventional rough-and-tumble; there are fewer of the inimitable *non sequiturs* of action and dialogue that used to delight us. We miss, too, that monumental grand dame Margaret Dumont, whose fortitude under Groucho's erratic and athletic handling was one of the special wonders of the pre-war Marx pictures. Most serious of all, perhaps, is the fact that "A Night in Casablanca" has run into plot trouble, and in all the to-do about Nazi spies and stolen art treasures, the Brothers' casual bond of intimacy with the audience is apt to be lost.

Groucho appears as the new manager of a luxury hotel in Casablanca, where the Nazis have cached a loot of French art treasures. Chico is the proprietor of a camel rank, specialising in Drive Yourself camels for tourists. Harpo, as much as your true clown can ever be anything but a clown, is valet to the leading Nazi, who is trying to escape . South America with the treasure. The villains, who have playfully murdered hotel managers already, are determined to eliminate Groucho, an anti-social easure which Chico and Harpo are aturally anxious to prevent.

It is significant of the change that come over the Marx comedy that can, to some extent, tell the story the new picture. Hitherto, except he case of "Room Service," there as never been anything so formal as tory to hold the delirious sequences ther. "A Night in Casablanca," urally, is still full of irrelevant gags, chases and incidents that bear no tion to their context, but we are never quite free to forget a plot that is by its nature, worth remembering. The bits are better than the whole.

SEE A DARK STRANGER" (Odeon) is a British spy story about an girl who has been brought up with such a hatred of the English that she ly becomes a tool in the hands of Nazi agents. She is sent to the Isle of to steal the secret plans of the Allied invasion of Normandy, which have stuffed into a seat in the gallery of the Manx parliament, and rather ssly over-d by the ary authori- Her mission peded by the stent atten- s of a British lier on leave, hom she takes to an Intelligence ficer, but who rns out to be simply a potential husband with a remarkably low I.Q.

Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat, the talented young men who were responsible for "Waterloo Road" and Millions Like " have done a asonably clever job with "I See a Dark Stranger." The trouble is that they have sometimes reached so far over trying to be clever that they have fallen flat on their faces. There is hardly a scene without some smart quip or social comment, but not all of them benefit, and some of them actually impede, the development. The last quarter, in particular, is built up as a series of showy but irrelevant climaxes, as though the producers felt they had half-a-dozen bright ideas for ending the picture, and could not bear to throw away one of them. At its best, "I See a Dark Stranger" is nicely ironic, and has some good suspense stuff in the Hitchcock manner; at its worst, it is apt to be clever-clever and smarty-smarty. The acting? By far the best acting comes from Raymond Huntley as the leading Nazi agent; a beautifully polished performance, controlled and perceptive. Deborah Kerr, as the heroine, looks charming, and manages an imitation of an Irish accent which, if not wholly reliable, is always pretty. Trevor Howard, as the incredibly dull-witted hero, continues without augmenting the promise he gave in "Brief Encounter," and suggests that he will do good work in a better part some day.

"My Reputation" (Warner Theatre) is based on Claire Jaynes' novel "Instruct My Sorrows." This domestic drama stars BARBARA STANWYCK *as Jessica Drummond, a young widow whose friendship with Scott Landis alienates both her austere, dominating mother Mrs. Kimball* (LUCILE WATSON) *and her two boys. However, Landis leaving for overseas comes to an understanding with Jessica; and she is reconciled with her family.*

"A GENIUS IN THE FAMILY" (Leicester Square) is based on his son's early reminiscences of Hiram Maxim, the American inventor of one of the world's more lethal weapons, who later became a British citizen and was knighted by Queen Victoria. There is no mention of the machine-gun in the film, nor, indeed, is there any hint that the inventor was other than an eccentric husband and parent, and a rather tiresome practical joker. As presented here by Don Ameche, Hiram Maxim invents nothing more lethal than a curling-iron, and it seems an odd whim on the part of America's House of Science to wish to have his portrait hung on their walls beside those of Watt, Stephenson and Thomas Edison. At a guess, I should say that ninety-nine out of a hundred people who see "A Genius in the Family" will accept it as pure screen fiction.

Taken as screen fiction, "A Genius in the Family" begins tolerably, as a slight comic sketch of social manners in the Brooklyn of the 1870's, meanders along for a time in an inconsequent way, and finally appears to give up the struggle and relapse into sheer drivel.

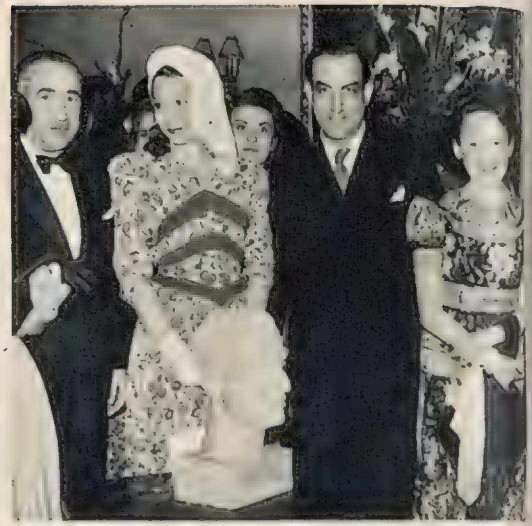
The story, such as it is, is concerned with the domestic embarrassments that first Father, and later, Father and Son Maxim, cause to Mother (Myrna Loy) by their lovable pranks and boyish whimsies. These include calling out the local fire brigade on a false alarm, daubing paint on to the hands of a celebrated scientist and running knitting needles into the posterior of a female visitor. The final prank almost brings about the death of Mrs. Maxim's second baby, by causing her to push the furniture around when she is in an advanced stage of pregnancy. However, by dint of prayer, in which father and son are joined by the family terrier, the catastrophe is averted, and the new Maxim is safely delivered; a bouncing child who can sit up and take notice apparently from the moment of birth.

"FIEVRES," the new French film at the Curzon, is clearly just a little piece run up to display the remarkable voice of Tino Rossi, the Italian tenor. And a wonderful voice it is, too; cool and rich and flexible, without a trace of that excruciating wobble affected by dramatic tenors who haven't got enough power in hand. The best way to enjoy "Fièvres," to my mind, is simply to shut your eyes and listen, but you might open them now and then when Jacqueline Delubac is on the screen, for Mlle. Delubac, as a naughty little witch who lures the tenor from his faithful wife, is worth watching. If you are oppressed by the world and the weather, you may enjoy glimpses of a cool monastery beside a lonely shore.

"Men of Two Worlds" (Gaumont, Haymarket, and Marble Arch Pavilion) is the story of the breaking of the power of witch-doctor Magole by the team-work of District Commissioner Randall (ERIC PORTMAN)*; young, over-zealous Dr. Catherine Munro* (PHYLLIS CALVERT) *and Kisenga* (ROBERT ADAMS*; standing), who has spent fifteen years in Europe and had success as musician and composer.*

Fighting sleeping sickness, Dr. Catherine Munro gives Kisenga's father a blood test. He dies as Magole, the witch-doctor, prophesies, and Kisenga is blamed, challenges Magole to take his blood; Magole does so, saying he too will die. Kisenga falls ill, but while trying to save him, Randall finds a song he composed for children; and hearing it sung outside his hut, Kisenga revives.

Constable's masterpiece "Stratford Mill" was bought at Christie's for 41,000 guineas by Mr. Walter Hutchinson, publisher, whose ambition is to found a National Gallery of British Sports and Pastimes. The picture will belong to the nation; contains angling detail.



Brazilian author-playwright PASCHOAL CARLOS MAG *was presented with a bust of himself at a party given the Baroness Pongrácz at 22 Manchester Square before left for Brazil. (L. to r.) H.E. the Chilean Ambassad Don Manuel Bianchi, Miss Wanda Rotha, Senor Carl Magno, Baroness Pongrácz.*

MARILYN, BARBARA *and* SUSAN SILVERSTONE, *the daughters of Mr. Murray Silverstone, President of Twentieth Century-Fox Corporation, are on a visit to this country.*

MAJOR A. HUSKISSON, M.C. *made a speech at the "Remember Normandy" exhibition opened recently at Simpson's, Piccadilly, by* MR. NOEL-BAKER, *Minister of State. L. to r.:* EARL DE LA WARR; MAJOR HUSKISSON; THE RT. HON. PHILIP NOEL-BAKER; *and H.E. the French Ambassador,* M. MASSIGLI.

The marriage of ISMAEL, *student leader of the Javanese Dancers who performed at the Embassy recently, and* ARIYAH PERWATA, *leading girl dancer of the company, took place at St. Pancras Town Hall.*

MAJOR R. C. SHARPLES, *The Welsh Guards, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Sharples, of Cadogan Place, married* MISS PAMELA NEWALL, *daughter of the late Lt.-Cdr. Keith W. Newall, R.N. (retired), and of Lady Claud Hamilton, at the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace.*

CAPTAIN W. LI. (JOHN) BAXENDALE, *Coldstream Guards, only surviving son of Captain and Mrs. Guy V. Baxendale, of Framfield Place, Uckfield, Sussex, and* LADY ELIZABETH FORTESCUE, *younger daughter of the Earl and Countess Fortescue, were married at St. Margaret's, Westminster.*

ROYAL AND OTHER OCCASIONS

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WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

MRS. CLARE BOOTHE LUCE, for a timely conversion.

American Congresswoman, author, playwright CLARE BOOTHE LUCE *likes us a little bit after all. Strongly supporting the U.S. loan to Britain during the debate in the House of Representatives, she said: "Any stranger watching this debate would think we were considering granting a loan to a treacherous enemy we had recently defeated rather than our best friend. . . ." Whereas the 1944 speeches of the "pin-up girl for the Republican campaign" bore a very different tone. Wife of Mr. Henry Robinson Luce, the publisher, she has written several successful plays, notably "The Women," a hit in London in 1939; and books of which "European Spring" was a best-seller. The spaniel's name is "Speaker."*

PHOTOGRAPH BY KARSH OF OTTAWA.

PLAYBOY PLAYWRIGHT NEVER GROWS OLD:

In the hall of the dramatist: Walking-sticks, umbrellas, hats of incredible shape! Only a man of G.B.S.'s stature would dare to wear the fishing-hat on top of the stand, and get away with it.

Creepers cover thickly Shaw's red-brick country house at Ayo
ied, is

Shaw's garden-house writing-room is built to revolve and face th sun. "No more photographs!" said he to the cameraman, who asked if it were true that the Irish are unreliable. "Of course they are! They're too busy enjoying life to be reliable!"

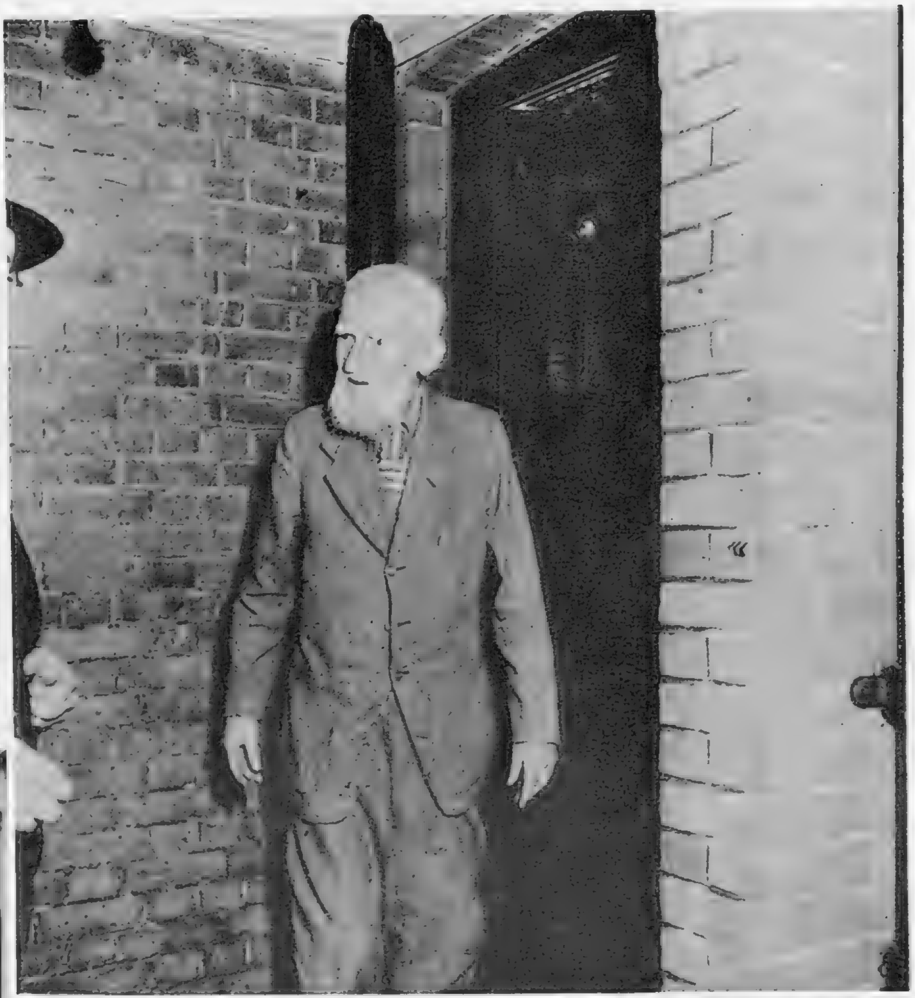
Red-haired people often prefer ginger cats. The venerable dramatist is no exception; and ginger Sandy's favourite spot is on a window-sill seat behind a statuette of his master.

IN two days' time, July 26, 1946, MR. GEORGE B
brated by the publication of a volume of essays
great dramatist's life and work. This satirical Socia
George Carr Shaw, who, says "Encyclopædia Britann
what in England would have been called the middle
literary life in London in the 1890's, and started
political work was done in the committees of the Fab
and debater. His hatred of hypocrisy and pretentiou
their immensely long satirical diatribes, are full of
young man and going st

N.B. A Coloured

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW IS NINETY.

nce, Hertfordshire. He seldom leaves it now since his wife ago.



" What, another photographer ? " G.B.S. just turned and slammed the door.

The finest contemporary English drama was written in this simple little garden-house. When G.B.S. decides that he is ready to write, he shuts the door, and no more is seen of him for just as long as he feels like it.

One of the very few living creatures who may be familiar with Mr. Shaw and get away with it is Sandy, who, they say, has spent two years trying to master his boss's new phonetic spelling.

D SHAW will be ninety. His birthday will be cele-
guished men paying tribute to varying aspects of our
of the theatre was born in Dublin in 1856, son of
an impoverished and humorously helpless member of
in Ireland is still called the gentry." He began his
s mark on the world in 1894. Before that his chief
, where he showed himself a brilliant and witty critic
ility runs through all his work, and all his plays, with
ersonal propaganda. At ninety G.B.S. is still a very
another well-known figure.

nserted in this issue.

HOME OF A SCULPT[...]
BRE[...]

BREDE PLACE, Sussex, lovely Tudor home [...] MRS. CLARE SHERIDAN, sculptor, author, [...] traveller, is one of the show places in the county. [...] is set in a hollow, has beautiful ancient gardens, [...] legend has it that an underground passage leads fr[...] the house to the church, the greater part of a m[...]

A front view of MRS. SHERIDAN'S *fifteenth-century home, Brede Place, Sussex. The windows are stone-mullioned; and some of the rooms are wood panelled. A great feature of the gardens is the topiary work – finely shaped hedges and trees.*

A massive Gothic door leads from the dining-room to a[...] brickwork; Mrs. Sheridan's portrait-bust of her[...] the right may be seen the c[...]

A splendid example of the ancient topiary work at Brede Place is cut into the shape of a nesting bird.

Mrs. Sheridan's carved four-poster bed is a very fine specimen dating from 1600 with elaborate ornamentation.

—CLARE SHERIDAN AT
LACE.

stant. Here Mrs. Sheridan carves portrait-heads and cred figures; her medium in so many cases being ees from the estate, chosen for suitable growth and rmation. One of her finest sculptures is the eight-foot-gh figure of the Madonna which stands in the village urch, a memorial to her son Dick, who died in 1937.

t of stone steps up into the garden. The floor is of in Winston Churchill is on the window-ledge; and to n ancient carved dining-table.

Another view of her beautiful house: showing the window of the private chapel for which Mrs. Sheridan has carved from a single Sussex cherry-tree a life-size Crucifixion figure; the tree had a big trunk and three perfectly balanced branches, two of which form the arms and the third the head.

e sculptor in her private fifteenth-century chapel, before a figure of the risen Christ which she carved from a piece of oak from the estate.

Mrs. Sheridan lighted a candle before the figure "Pre-Nativity" which she carved from a pine-tree from historic Battle Abbey.

In the opera Tarquinius (FRANK ROGIER) *causes the death of Lucretia* (NANCY EVANS). *Off-stage they share a cup of coffee.*

Lucretia's friend (LESLIE DUFF) *bows down in sorrow while Collatinus* (NORMAN WALKER) *sustains her in her death agony.*

In conference: (l. to r.) conductor REGINALD GOODALL; *composer* BENJAMIN BRITTEN; *stage manager* RUDOLF BING.

Lucretia's virtue is gone; desperate in her shame she drives the dagger into her heart.

A rehearsal snapshot of lovely NANCY EVANS *who plays the leading rôle of the virtuous Lucretia.*

In deep mourning tragic Lucretia holds high the suicidal dagger.

FRANK ROGIER *plays Tarquinius to Nancy Evans's Lucretia. He hails from Illinois.*

NORMAN WALKER *is Collatinus, Lucretia's tender-hearted husband, whose kindness in her shame leads to her suicide.*

FREDERICK SHARP *plays Junius, a great friend of Collatinus and Lucretia.*

GLYNDEBOURNE REOPENS — REHEARSAL VIEW.

FOR Glyndebourne's reopening Mr. John Christie chose Benjamin Britten's masterpiece "The Rape of Lucretia." Two entirely different casts, nearly all British, perform the opera on alternate nights. Distinguished conductors have been engaged—M. Ernest Ansermet, Mr. Reginald Goodall and Mr. H. Oppenheim; John Piper has made a fine work of the décor; and the libretto is derived by Ronald Duncan from Livy and Shakespeare. The opera tells how Lucretia, wife of Collatinus, found to be the only faithful and virtuous wife in Rome, was betrayed by Tarquinius, and stabbed herself in her shame.

BACK TO GLYNDEBOURNE: THE SOCIAL SIDE.

In the most glittering stretch of high summer we have had for years Mr. John Christie's Glyndebourne opera house reopened with British opera—Benjamin Britten's "Rape of Lucretia." With thirsty expectation opera-lovers in full evening dress crowded down to Lewes; strolled among the flowers and trees of the lovely grounds during intervals and after dinner. No one could possibly have foreseen such wonderful weather for the opening of the Glyndebourne festival after seven years; an artistic event of the first magnitude.

" Helen of Troy." A bouffant version of the Greek myth, showing how Paris accomplished his flight with Helen of Troy. Above: Paris (ANDRÉ EGLEVSKY) plays with his pet lamb (BARBARA FALLIS).

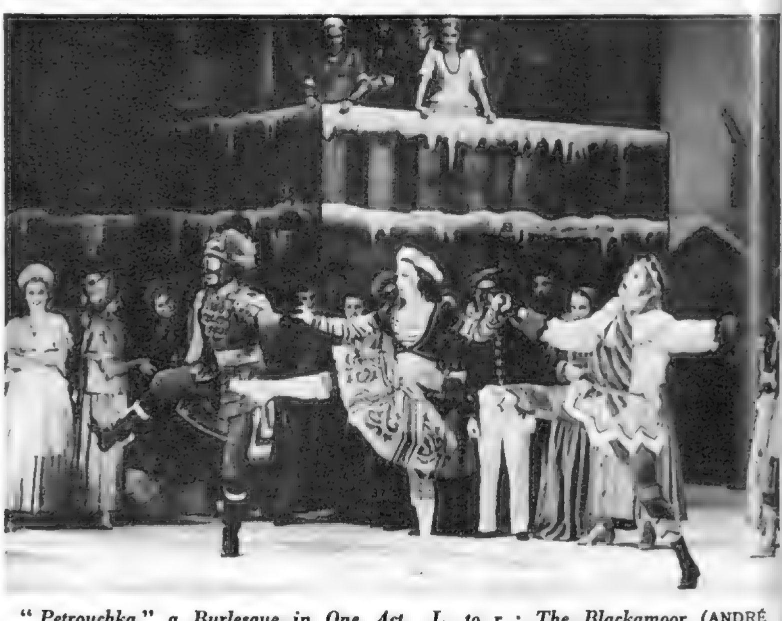
Helen (DIANA ADAMS), wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta, away from her husband's Court, indulges in a burst of exhibitionism and dances with the Spartans.

" Three Virgins and a Devil." Three virgins, one a prig, one lustful, one greedy, on their way to church meet a devil. Above: The lustful one (SHIRLEY ECKL) dances with the devil (MICHAEL KIDD).

The three virgins dance together. L. to r.: The Priggish One (MURIEL BENTLEY); the Greedy One (LUCIA CHASE); the Lustful One (SHIRLEY ECKL). Choreography by Agnes de Mille; music by Respighi.

The devil does everything he can to tempt the Priggish Virgin; preys on her pity by pretending to be lonely; persists; carries her off like the others struggling to his cave.

In the grand pas de deux from " Don Quixote." Cuban-born ALICIA ALONSO and Midwest JOHN KRIZA of Czech parentage give a brilliant performance. Music by John Minkus; choreography by Anatole Oboukhoff after Petipa.



" Petrouchka," a Burlesque in One Act. L. to r.: The Blackamoor (ANDRÉ EGLEVSKY); the Dancer (LUCIA CHASE); and Petrouchka (MICHAEL KIDD). The costumes used were made by Mexican seamstresses with Mexican fabrics.

NEW YORK THEATRE BALLETS AT COVENT GARDEN.

SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR " THE SKETCH " BY ROGER WOOD.

After a long tour, C. B. Cochran's "BIG BEN," musical and political satire on the merry England of 1946, arrived at the Adelphi last week. Written by Sir Alan P. Herbert, with music by Vivian Ellis, the story is that of young shop-girl Gracie (CAROLE LYNNE; lower picture, speechifying), elected to Parliament against the wishes of her father Benjamin Green (DAVID DAVIES; centre, top picture), who is His Majesty's Bargemaster and is nicknamed "Big Ben." Through eleven brilliant scenes we see Gracie win her way to the House, pleading for tolerance, fighting the Temperance Bill, yet a romantic who falls for the rival candidate. The superb pageantry and wicked wit, the songs and parades and dances, give a series of situations which are memorable and sumptuous.

"BIG BEN" STRIKES AT THE ADELPHI THEATRE.

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

IN Mr. Priestley's new novel the bright day that brought forth the adder was the narrator's youth, his youth which came abruptly to an end in August 1914; and among the bright days stands out one hot, sunshiny Sunday when Gregory Dawson joined the Alington family for an ill-fated picnic on Pikeley Scar. Ever since he first saw them in a train, talking together rather loudly, the Alington family, the three lovely daughters and their two brothers, had be-glamoured him; not only did they open his heart to music with Bridget's performance in Schubert's Trio, but they represented to him life and splendour and joy: perhaps he was a little in love with Bridget. What unexampled happiness to find himself employed by Mr. Alington, in his wool firm, and able to mingle freely with his idols! After the war he scarcely saw the friendly Yorkshire town of Bruddersford again, nor, except for one or two disappointing glimpses, did he see the Alingtons; but the romantic image of them persisted in his imagination. Now, turned fifty, a hard-bitten, successful writer of film-scripts, he reviews the story, perhaps with some unconscious idea of psycho-analysing himself; for success had not made him happy, and in the intervals of writing the words of "The Lady Hits Back" he felt stale and tired of himself. The hotel was comfortable, the Cornish coast magnificent, Elizabeth Earl, the film-star, was warmly affectionate; but he could not give his mind to any of them, for the past held him in thrall.

The Wrong Turning. At some point, quite early on, he had taken the wrong turning, made the *gran rifinito*, neglected plain-spoken Mr. Ackworth's warning to let out the something that "goes on natterin' at you day and night." Result: stagnation and even atrophy of the emotions, boredom, disillusion which cannot be accounted for even by a wartime diet (the war is just over) and its lack of vitamins. He is as glum and crusty as one of Mr. Somerset Maugham's heroes, as desperate (though driven by less fantastic furies) as one of Mr. Evelyn Waugh's.

For her broadcasts in aid of the Fourth Australian Victory War Loan (£85,000,000), MISS DIANA WYNYARD *was presented by the Commonwealth of Australia with a silver and enamel plaque. It was handed to her by* MR. J. A. BEASLEY, *the Resident Minister in London for Australia, and bears the coat-of-arms of the Commonwealth and the badges of Australia and Tasmania.*

"Bright Day" will rank high among Mr. Priestley's novels. Its chief fault is a certain monotony. Not of presentation, for the presentation, skilfully alternating between past and present, keeps the appetite continually whetted; but of tone. Perhaps this is inevitable. Dawson's thoughts were grey and heavy; even when he is recounting happy things he remembers that every silver lining has its cloud. His toxic discouragement does slightly infect the story, for it is a genuine malaise of the spirit, never insisted on but brought home by countless small touches; and pervasive.

For a moment or two I experienced that feeling of loneliness and sadness which comes immediately after a long-distance call from somebody you know very well.

I will say this about film producers—they still have prestige in a world in which nearly everybody else has lost it.

Just before the end Mr. Priestley cleverly modulates his way into a major chord, and the story closes with the promise of another day in which the cinema (whose importance to the "deep unconscious" of the modern world Mr. Priestley indicates in a brilliant passage), purged of commercialism and false glamour, will express the heightened social and aesthetic consciousness of the young and the clear-eyed. But, in exchange for a few pages of uplift, there are several hundred pages of downdrift, and I think that Mr. Priestley's warnings are even more valuable than his counsel. Discussing the war, Jock Barniston says: "Collectively people don't mind lunacy. They often find it easier than sanity, and more of a relief."

Sayings as memorable as this occur frequently; they reinforce the book's powerful and haunting imaginative appeal, so that at every level of consciousness our minds are nourished and satisfied. Indeed, Mr. Priestley's gift seems to have developed in many directions. Moments of exquisite sensibility to fleeting moods and impressions seem to come unsought; there is a classic sense of *lacrimae rerum*, of youthful promise unfulfilled, of goodwill (*e.g.*, Elizabeth Earl's) misdirected and misapplied; an unfaltering instinct for proportion; and a gallery of interesting portraits, of which the sketch of the boy, David Alington, done with a few casual strokes, is perhaps the most living and distinguished.

Problem of India. Looked at from whatever point of view, political, social, economic, religious, racial, India, with its 400,000,000 inhabitants, constitutes a world problem of the first magnitude and importance. Considering this problem, the average man like myself is apt either to feel utterly at sea, incapable of forming any opinion at all, or else, from the mere wish to say something, to suggest a short cut which would obviously be fatal. The Indian problem is too complex to admit of any simplified solution. For the British to leave India at once, as some of their extremists would like us to do, would be as unpracticable as for the British to remain in India forever—a course that doubtless recommends itself to some of the extremists on our side.

Lieut.-Colonel C. B. Birdwood writes as an Englishman and a soldier, but also as a student and lover of India with many years' experience of that country. "A Continent Experiments" is a comprehensive survey; no important aspect of India is neglected. But this does not mean that Colonel Birdwood's treatment of his subject is superficial. Many writers have visited India and, on an incomplete acquaintance, delivered themselves of very strong judgments and opinions. Some of these writers Colonel Birdwood examines; he finds a good deal to criticise, as well as much to agree with, in recent literature about India. In this department, as in others, he is thorough and up-to-date; in the fictional field Miss Christine Weston's "Indigo" gets a special mention.

The Two Voices. I can only indicate the extent of his purview and repeat that in these 250 closely printed, carefully considered, well-documented pages there is much for any Englishman, and perhaps something for a good many Indians, to learn—and to learn without tears, for the author has the gift of making information appetising. The illustrations are charming and unusual; princes, political leaders and people are caught in their off moments, chatting, strolling, having their hair cut. But I suppose that what most people would like to know is his conclusions on some of the greater issues—what kind of Government would be best for India, for instance, and whether Dominion Status could satisfy her national aspirations. "As long as there is an executive in Delhi which is not fully responsible to an electorate, India will never learn the lessons of true nationhood," he says. She must experiment in democratic government, and learn by experience, even if at first it costs her dear. As for Dominion Status, there is "everywhere a background ready" for it. "The voice which is loudest may be the demand for complete independence. But the voice of those who think as opposed to those who shout is for a continued association with the British Commonwealth."

A Conspiracy of Silence. "The Late Mrs. Prioleau" can be best described as a psychological study written in the mode of a detective story. It opens with the funeral of Mrs. Prioleau as observed by a daughter-in-law who had never met her. She is interested in the character of her late mother-in-law, about which there appears to her to be a conspiracy of silence. Her children, themselves odd and mysterious, refuse to talk of her: the daughter-in-law, Susan, proceeds to investigate. The progress of her investigations is the subject of the book. Only in the last few pages is the riddle completely solved.

Perhaps the plan of the story is not wholly original. But it is a good plan. Unlike many psychological studies, the book is interesting as a story. We read on, anxious to know what will come out next; and all the more because Miss Tindall is a skilful, economical story-teller who makes every incident further her purpose. She is weakest as a creator of character. Except for Austin, none of the figures is very vivid; and Mrs. Prioleau herself suffers, like other characters in modern fiction, from her creator's acquaintance with psychological text-books. She is a case rather than an individual. All the same, "The Late Mrs. Prioleau" is always agreeable to read and sometimes exciting, and its effect is not commonplace.

Fate of a Civil Servant. The Shergold Engineering Company was far from prosperous; indeed, it had reached a critical stage. For this state of affairs the company's founder and managing director blamed the Government official sent by the Ministry to investigate the accounts. Since in these days Civil Servants come in for a lot of criticism, often couched in rather threatening language, the murky end of the rather unattractive Mr. Barry Foster will cause neither surprise nor, possibly, resentment to the readers of "Left-handed Death"; but the manner of his taking-off will not altogether satisfy those captious critics who value the outmoded virtues of probability and verisimilitude.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Bright Day. By J. B. Priestley. (*Heinemann; 10s. 6d.*)
A Continent Experiments. By Lt.-Col. The Hon. C. B. Birdwood. (*Skeffington; 21s.*)
The Late Mrs. Prioleau. By Monica Tindall. (*Peter Davies; 8s. 6d.*)
Left-handed Death. By Richard Hull. (*Collins; 7s. 6d.*)

Pin-up Girl:
No.57. Phyllis Robins

Blonde PHYLLIS ROBINS *stars as Althea the Roman in Noel Langley's dramatisation of his own best-seller "Cage Me a Peacock," a musical now on tour before coming to London. It is the first straight part to be played by this star of radio and variety. The music is by Norman Smith. Phyllis ran her own farm in Cumberland during the war. Her two fascinating and intelligent Siamese cats, Maifair Mignonette and Maifair Miri, were born in V.J. week.*

FINIS.*

By KAY HAMMOND-DAVIES.

BIRTHDAYS, she thought, surveying herself in the looking-glass, should be done away with. Nobody ought to know how old they were, and it would then be up to them to cheat the years—if they could. She deliberately refused to do the sum necessary to find her age, and thanked God nobody knew it was her birthday, or how old she was. All her relations who might have known were dead.

She was Miss Flame—Miss by choice, of course, for she had had her chance when she was young, much younger than she was now, and nice-looking, too. But she had turned him down, hoping for someone better—someone with prospects. He had none. But now she wished she had not said " No." Any husband would be better than none. Any company better than her own.

She titivated her hair, and pulling out a very old lipstick looked at it several times before she put it back in her drawer, unused. It would never do to use lipstick when she was giving her music lessons. The children would notice at once and perhaps they would lose all respect for her. Miss Flame gave private lessons to children in the town, not because she wanted to augment her income, which was quite adequate, but because she had to do something to occupy her time. And giving lessons to unmusical children who would never be able to play in any case, was as good a way as any other.

She treated herself to lunch in a rather smart restaurant and ordered a glass of sherry with it, feeling she deserved a treat on her birthday. Afterwards she had coffee in the lounge and let her mind drift back over the years. There was nothing to show for being alive at all. Her simple talents had died on her; not blossomed and bloomed and borne fruit as they should have done. She had just wasted the years.

She remembered amusedly how as a girl she had joined a correspondence club. A friend had told her it was fun and she had written asking for the names of men interested in music and reading. That time had not been at all successful, though she had some fun out of the letter she received. The only man she arranged to meet turned out to be quite black. She laughed now when she remembered her horror when she saw him clasping a letter in her handwriting to his bosom, and anxiously scanning the passers-by for his new lady friend. And how she had fled!

She wondered would she join again, this time because she genuinely wanted a friend, someone to be interested in, someone to think of and with.

It was so easily done. She remembered the ropes even after all these years. Just a postal order to send, the cost of which meant nothing to her. Then to await results. They came within three days—twelve names of men requiring—indeed, asking for—women friends who would write to them. She wrote to all twelve religiously. Writing came easily to her. She wrote fluently and well. Always she preferred to write than to telephone. One was an effort, the other a pleasure. She had always felt dimly superior, knowing that this was a rare gift, and that though most people liked to receive a letter, very few could be bothered to write them.

Just as before, the replies came in quickly within a few posts. She had not said how old she was and her letters sounded attractive. She had eight replies to the twelve letters, but only one of them interested her. This letter was from a Leslie Ettridge, who gave a Monomark address. His letter was charming and educated and had a hint of humour about it which appealed to her tremendously. She replied to him at once. After a fortnight she heard again. He repeated what he had said in his first letter, and made it clear that he only wanted a woman friend to whom he could write, and from whom he hoped to hear also, once a fortnight. His insistence on the fortnight between their letters struck her as rather odd, but he also said this time that it must be a pen friendship only. Seeing each other, or the desire to do so, must not enter into it. She wrote back at once and promised she would never ask to see him.

She did not hear between fortnights, but his letters continued to attract her. They were inspired and knowledgeable. His views on subjects of a topical nature made interesting reading. She found herself obliged to read the papers now, instead of skipping through them, in order to keep abreast. She often copied the views from the papers and wrote them in her own words to him, hoping he would think the ideas were original. She found her own company less irksome now that she had an object and reason for acquiring knowledge. She wrote to him carefully, often correcting the letter over and over again before she sent it.

He wrote from the first once a fortnight, never more, never less. She tried to do the same, and though she wrote to him nearly every day, she tried not to post a letter more than once a week. The unposted letters she burnt.

At the end of three months the letters had changed their form. They had become love-letters.

She had never had a love-letter before, and they utterly captivated her. His were literate, charming and bold. The only thing he never mentioned was any wish to see her, but this lack was at first almost unnoticeable. He never deviated from his fortnightly letter even now, but she found herself, caught by the intensity of his wooing, writing every day and posting them more often than once a week, although to keep herself down to this minimum of posted letters was an effort she could hardly achieve. She longed intensely to be able to post the letters every day, especially as she knew they would take two days to reach him, because of the necessity of sending them to his Monomark address.

At length she broke down and pleaded to be allowed to see him, just once. He laughed at her and chid her. Was she so anxious to put her head into the noose? Couldn't she trust him? Didn't she believe he was sincere without dragging meetings into it? He joked about the meetings and drew pictures of their failure to contact. He laughed her out of it that time, and the letters went on. She was so occupied with her love that she gave up her music lessons. The children annoyed her and took her thoughts away from where they wanted to be.

At her next birthday she was desperate. She broke down again and begged, pleaded and implored to see him. She had imagined him in a hundred ways. At first she imagined him young and handsome. Now she had begun to think of him as old, ugly, deformed. A thief—a murderer—but she did not care. All she wanted was to see him—to look at him—just once.

He told her she would only hate herself if she did. He reminded her of her promise to him never to ask to see him. It was a year old now, but it was still a promise. But she went on begging and imploring. She said it was making her ill—and indeed it was. She said she would not mind what he was like or reproach him for anything. She promised not to be disappointed, but she *must* see him.

He said it was surely better to continue their love as before without degrading it, as a meeting must degrade it. He told her that it would mean the end of everything. He told her to remember always that it was her own doing, not his. She would never write to him again once she had seen him. She would never forgive herself. But in the end he gave in and said she might see him if she must, but that she must not speak to him or compel him to see her. She promised this too.

He told her he would be sitting on a certain seat under a hornbeam in the park at a certain time on a certain day. She knew the seat well, for she often sat there herself on warm days. It was a favourite seat of hers, as it was shaded and sheltered. Children's Nannies occasionally sat there and knitted while their charges played around, and in the mornings a middle-aged woman used to be there, reading her morning paper.

She passed there herself every day on her way to the town for her shopping, and had got used to seeing the Nannies and the middle-aged woman. She sat there herself when she had time, and very often wrote her letters to him there. She had told him of the place, and supposed that was why he had chosen it. Two o'clock, he said.

For a fortnight she lived on air, although she faced the possibility that he was old and ugly or worse. She passed the tree now several times a day, but there was never anyone there at two o'clock. He must know that it was quiet there then.

On the appointed day she was there before the time. She had eaten nothing all day, and was feeling nervous and a trifle sick. At one-forty-five, when she was sitting on a seat some little way away, she saw the middle-aged woman come across and sit down under the hornbeam. She pulled out a book and began to write. Maddening creature, just to choose that place and that seat to-day of all days. Two o'clock was not her hour. She almost collected courage to go and ask her to move to another seat, but not quite. There was plenty of room for him to come and sit without being disturbed.

She waited all afternoon till it was growing dusk and the middle-aged woman had long since gone, but she saw nobody.

The middle-aged woman signed the cheque with a sigh of relief. The Editor had written that he required any number of her latest love-stories—in fact, as many as she could produce. His public was greedy for them. But she looked grimly determined as she signed this last cheque from him. Truth to tell, they had bored her unutterably, and thank goodness the matter had been taken out of her own hands. Now that she was going back to her old style of novels, she would write "Finis" to Love.

[THE END.

***All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.**

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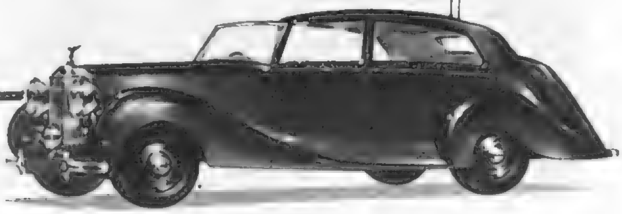

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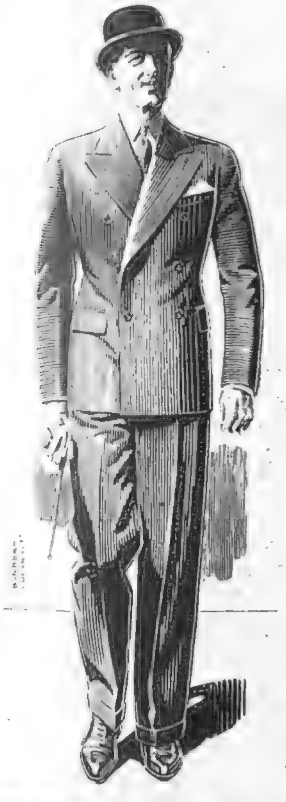

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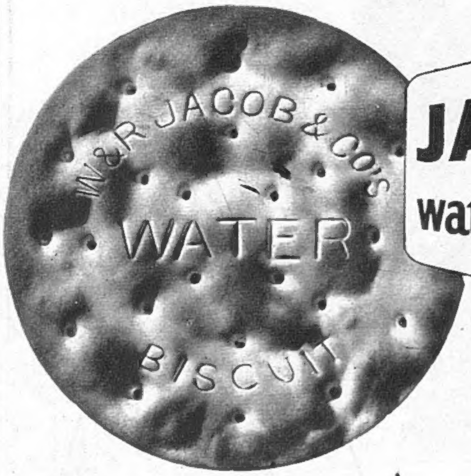

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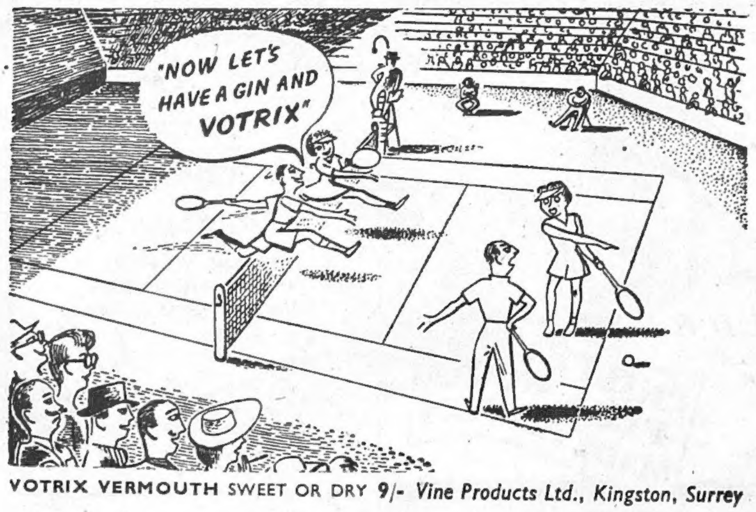

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